

June 15, 2007

# Thomas the Tank Engine Toys Recalled Because of Lead Paint

By ANGEL JENNINGS

The toy maker RC2 Corporation pulled a number of its Thomas & Friends trains and accessory parts off the shelves yesterday after learning that the red and yellow paint used to decorate more than 1.5 million of the toys contained lead.

Lead, if ingested by children, can cause long-term neurological problems that affect learning and behavior.

"Parents should not delay in getting these toys away from their kids," Scott Wolfson, spokesman for the Consumer Product Safety Commission, said yesterday.

An alert posted at a Web site devoted to the toy line, [www.totallythomas.com](http://www.totallythomas.com), included a list of more than two dozen items affected by the recall. The company noted that toys that bear a code containing a "WJ" or "AZ" on the bottom of the toy or the inside of the battery door are not included in the recall.

The company at first urged consumers to mail in their Thomas toys, at their expense, in exchange for a replacement and a free train, an offer that angered some consumers.

Many Thomas the Tank Engine fans have collected dozens of trains, boxcars or railroad stations, and shipping several heavy pieces could quickly become expensive. Later yesterday, the company, which is based in Oak Brook, Ill., agreed to handle the shipping cost for all consumers who request it.

The affected Thomas toys were manufactured in China, which has come under fire recently for exporting a variety of goods, from pet food to toothpaste, that may pose safety or health hazards. "These are not cheap, plastic McDonald's toys," said Marian Goldstein of Maplewood, N.J., who spent more than \$1,000 on her son's Thomas collection, for toys that can cost \$10 to \$70 apiece. "But these are what is supposed to be a high-quality children's toy."

Ms. Goldstein's 4-year-old son owns more than 40 pieces from the Thomas series, and seven of them were on the recall list, including the Sodor deluxe fire station, a footlong piece that is a little heavier than the average train.

Ms. Goldstein said she wondered who would pay for testing her son for lead poisoning if her insurance did not cover it.

## **Reebok bracelets recalled for lead danger**

4-year-old child died after swallowing a piece of jewelry, government says

**The Associated Press**

Updated: 2:11 p.m. ET March 23, 2006

WASHINGTON - Reebok is recalling 300,000 children's charm bracelets because a 4-year-old died from lead poisoning after swallowing a piece of the jewelry, the government said Thursday.

The silver-colored bracelets, bearing heart-shaped charms engraved with the "Reebok" name, were given away from May 2004 through this month with the purchase of children's shoes in major shoe stores across the country. The bracelets contain high levels of lead, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said.

CPSC officials said a child from Minneapolis died after reportedly swallowing part of one of the bracelets. They did not release the child's name.

"I want to assure all of our consumers and our retailers that I will do everything in my power to ensure that no other family, no other child, suffers a similar tragedy," Paul Harrington, president and CEO of Canton, Mass.-based Reebok International Ltd., said in a statement.

Harrington said in a phone interview that the bracelets were manufactured in China by a contractor. He said Reebok was investigating how the bracelets reached the market despite the lead risk.

"I'm conducting a full review of our procedures," he said.

Reebok learned of the child's death on March 10 from Minnesota health authorities, and Reebok sales employees began notifying retailers three days later to stop distributing the bracelets, Harrington said.

The family of the child who died hasn't contacted Reebok about any possible litigation, he said.

In a separate action Thursday, the CPSC said about 580,000 necklace and ring sets, imported by Dollar Tree Distribution Inc., are being recalled for a lead poisoning danger.

The silver-colored, adjustable rings come in a variety of designs with a toy "gem" in the center. The necklaces have a black string with silver-colored clasps and a silver-colored charm with a "gem" in the center.

The packages are printed with "Mood Necklace," "Mood Ring," "Glow in the Dark Necklace," "Glow in the Dark Ring," "UV Necklace" or "UV Ring." The "UV" jewelry packaging reads, "The Sun's Energy Will Change The Color." Printed on the back of the packaging is "SKU.815485" and the name "Mannix."

The jewelry was sold at Dollar Tree, Dollar Bills, Dollar Express, Greenbacks, Only \$1 and Super Dollar Tree stores nationwide from September 2003 through February 2006.

Consumers owning either the Reebok or Dollar Tree jewelry should take it from children immediately, the CPSC said.

For more information, call CPSC at 800-638-2772, Reebok at 800-994-6260, or Dollar Tree at 800-876-8077.

© 2006 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

URL: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11974094>



## Lead in Children's Lunch Boxes

[Latest News](#)[Test Your  
Child's Lunch Box](#)[Photos &  
Factsheets  
\(en espanol\)](#)[Get Involved](#)

August 15, 2006

### **A Back to School Warning: Children's Vinyl Lunch Boxes Can Contain Dangerous Levels of Lead**

Common soft plastic lunchboxes can contain an unwanted poisonous metal, lead. The Center for Environmental Health has been testing lunchboxes for lead since last summer and has found lead in popular brands of vinyl lunchboxes. The level of lead in one lunch box, an Angela Anaconda box made by Targus International, tested at 56,400 parts per million (ppm) of lead, more than 90 times the 600 ppm legal limit for lead in paint in children's products.

"Lead exposure should not be on the lunch menu when kids' go back to school this fall," said Michael Green, CEH Executive Director. "There is no reason to expose children to any lead from lunch boxes. We are calling on these companies to recall these products and take action to eliminate lead from their products in the future."

Initial independent laboratory testing commissioned by CEH last year found seventeen lunch boxes with high lead levels. Since then, a number of leading lunch box manufacturers, including InGear and Fast Forward, have agreed to reduce or eliminate the amount of lead in their lunchboxes. Just last month, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration wrote a letter to manufacturers and urged "companies to refrain from marketing such lead-containing lunchboxes." As a result, CEH has found that, although lunchboxes are not yet lead-free, there are fewer lunchboxes with lead on store shelves this year.

In most cases, the highest lead levels CEH found were in the lining of lunch boxes, where lead could come into direct contact with food. Lead is known to be harmful to children even in minute amounts, as it can impair brain development and cause other behavioral and developmental problems. Children may be exposed to lead from lunch boxes when they eat food that has been stored in them. Handling the lunchboxes just before eating could also be an exposure risk.

It is not possible to tell by appearance whether a vinyl lunch box may contain lead, so CEH is advising parents to avoid vinyl lunch boxes altogether. Parents can also cheaply and easily test vinyl lunchboxes for lead; for information visit [www.cephca.org/lunchboxes.htm#test](http://www.cephca.org/lunchboxes.htm#test).

Photos of some of the lunch boxes can be found at [www.cephca.org/lunchboxes.htm#photos](http://www.cephca.org/lunchboxes.htm#photos).